

"and had to be unloaded and allowed to drift empty to the foot of the rapid where it was secured. On the 5th we ran the Crooked rapid where we wrecked one of the barges, which was afterwards repaired. On the 6th ran all the boats down the Big Cascade—a perpendicular drop in the river of four and a half feet—having first lighted the boats of half their loads and portaged the stuff. On the 7th ran the Mountain and Moberly rapids, and landed at Fort McMurray in the evening, hav-

ing been twenty-four days of continuous hard labor surrounded by constant danger from the time we arrived at the Grand rapids, and thankful that no lives were lost, although we had lost one of the barges and ten tons of valuable freight."

In commenting on the above experiences, Capt. Smith says:

"On my return to Edmonton from the north in 1886 the company sent me back by the Green Lake route and Prince Albert, thence by team

"to Edmonton, as this was, notwithstanding the long drive from Prince Albert to Edmonton, by far the quickest and safest route, and which I found to be the case."

And he says further, "From Green Lake to Fort McMurray, fish are abundant, and ducks and geese in their season. There are no fish in the Athabasca river above Fort McMurray. This alone is a factor of economy in favor of the Green Lake route."

Opinion of Bishop Pascal

For a Quarter of a Century he has travelled in the Far North

No missionary in the great Northwest has had a wider or more eventful experience in travelling that country than Bishop Pascal, of Saskatchewan. We append without comment the following letter, received by the Prince Albert Board of Trade from him:

Bishop's Palace,
Prince Albert,
Dec. 3, 1897.

To Mr. F. C. Baker.

Dear Sir,—You have expressed a wish to know my opinion as to the best route to follow in order to reach the celebrated gold mines on the Klondike. Here it is:

While waiting until the railway companies, with the assistance of government, open a direct line across the fertile valley of the Saskatchewan to reach Pelly river (let us say for example via Portage la Prairie, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Shell River, Jackfish Lake, Victoria, Athabasca Landing, Little Slave Lake, Peace River, Liard river and Pelly river,) while awaiting this railway which is now impending, I do not hesitate to tell you that in my opinion—and I believe it to be the true one, the most comfortable, the most direct, and the most easy route is that which the hand of Divine Providence has traced, and which has been followed for a century by the Hudson's Bay Co.'s men, and for a half century by the missionaries who evangelize the Indians of the Northwest in the immense districts of Athabasca and McKenzie.

Taking Regina for a starting point we may go to McMurray by two routes, one via Prince Albert, Green Lake, Portage la Loche, Clearwater River and McMurray; the other via Calgary, Edmonton, Athabasca Landing and McMurray. On leaving McMurray the traveller is borne down stream as far as Peel river, without effort, without danger and without difficulty. Everywhere on his road he will meet with Hudson's Bay company's posts and missionaries willing to render service and who inculcate charity; half-breeds and Indians ready to serve as guides and facilitate his voyage without being too exorbitant. Besides Athabasca and the Great Slave Lake, which one can cross without danger, there is the portage of Fort Smith, forty miles below Lake Athabasca. This portage is eighteen

miles in length, and can be made by wagons or carriages, drawn by horses or oxen.

Starting from Regina, you will ask me which is the best route to reach McMurray? Is it via Edmonton, or via Prince Albert and Green Lake? I confess, dear sir, that I should prefer Prince Albert and Green Lake. These are my reasons: This route is direct everywhere; and is shorter by about

mountains swell the river, as happens two or three times each spring, the waves are enormous, and one blunder might cost you your life. It is better to avoid the rapids. The guides, who at such times hold the fate of the traveler in their hands, occasionally show themselves exorbitant and dishonest. In autumn, when the water is low, the bed of the rapids is strewn with rocks and shoals, necessitating, in such cases, the portaging of goods, and occasioning much loss of time. Beside Grand Rapids, which resembles the key of the country to the north, the traveler has yet to pass nine more rapids, some of them several miles in length, in which there is great risk of loss of life and property. These reasons alone, to say nothing of economy and saving of time decide my opinion in favor of the route via Regina, Prince Albert, Green Lake, Portage la Loche, Portage la Pelly, and



SANDERSON'S LUMBER YARD AND MILLS, PRINCE ALBERT

300 miles; it presents not the least danger, and is exceedingly cheap. It is by this road that the Hudson's Bay company has transmitted its goods for seventy-five years to provision its trading posts on the Athabasca and McKenzie. The company would still continue to do so had not the development of its commerce compelled it to utilize the Calgary and Edmonton railway and to construct a steamer on Athabasca river.

All those who have ascended or descended the River Athabasca have retained a souvenir of the difficulties and dangers to which they were exposed in descending the impetuous torrent. When the waters from the

Clearwater river and McMurray. As I have already said, this route presents no danger, is direct, very pleasant, and is like a pleasure trip. The essential point is to have a boat at Green Lake prepared beforehand so as to gain time.

Such, my dear sir, is my humble opinion, based upon my numerous voyages by each of these routes during the 24 years I have resided in the Northwest, 16 of which were passed by the missions on the Athabasca and McKenzie.

Accept, dear sir, my best salutations.
(Signed) ALBERT PASCAL, O.M.I.,
Vic. Apost. de Saskatchewan.